Our Bible Text

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SOME RECENTLY DISCOVERED BIBLICAL DOCUMENTS,

WITH THREE PLATES

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BY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The contents of the following pages have as their basis a course of Lectures delivered in various centres of the metropolis under the auspices of the *Central Society of Sacred Study* (London Diocese.) The writer had no original intention of publishing the course, and it is only in deference to a number of requests that he has done so.

The main subject dealt with, the text of the Bible, is one which seems to be interesting an ever increasing number not only of the clergy, but also of the laity; and this is very natural; for while, on the one hand, many people look upon the text of the Bible as something sacrosanct, which as presented in the Authorized Version, must be accepted in its minutest details, others believe themselves justified in manipulating it to any extent. It is no wonder that in view of such extreme attitudes many devout lovers of the Bible whose devotion does not, however, prevent them from reading and studying it with intelligence, should feel a certain bewilderment, and should be asking themselves what the authority of the Biblical text really is. The following pages seek to offer a very humble contribution to the task of answering such an enquiry. It may be asserted without fear of contradiction, that the wisest course must be to try and steer between the extremes indicated; for while arbitrary cutting up of the Biblical text is to be deprecated, it would be equally unwise to regard it as in all respects infallible; "it is now a matter of common consent that the books of the New Testament [and also of the Old

Testament] have not come down to us miraculously perfect, and in examining the text of the Scriptures in which we think we have eternal life, the work of criticism helps to restore what the errors of countless scribes and translators have made imperfect in the version which we have in our present-day Bibles. The scientific spirit certainly has a part to play in devout study."*

For the permission given to reproduce the three Plates of the documents under consideration I beg to express my sincere thanks to the following: for Plate I. to W. L. Nash, Esq., and the Council of the "Society of Biblical Archaeology"; for Plate II. to the Council of the "Egypt Exploration Fund"; and for Plate III. to Messrs. J. C. Hinrichs, of Leipzig.

My indebtedness to Dr. Swete and to Prof. Burkitt, to both of whom I owe so much in many ways, as well as to Mr. Stanley A. Cooke, will be seen by the many references to their works in the following pages.

W.O.E.O.

* Canon Peile, in a lecture delivered in Harrow Parish Church.

INTRODUCTION.

THE last ten or twelve years have witnessed the discovery of a great mass of material which is of the greatest interest and importance to all students of the Bible. But among the "finds," large as their number is, those which contain the actual text of parts of the Bible have not been very numerous; their quality—*i.e.*, their great importance—has been more pronounced than their quantity.

As a rule, when such documents as these have come to light, some brief account of them appears in the daily papers, so that the general public become acquainted with the bare facts; but as any detailed accounts are in such cases out of the question, those who are not scholars are unable to realize the full significance of what is described. To gain an insight into what such documents really mean as regards their relationship to Biblical study, and as to the way in which they affect the text of the Bible, recourse must be had to articles in theological magazines or learned books; and too often the ordinary reader finds it very difficult to understand these, since, as is inevitable, such articles and books must take for granted some previous knowledge on the part of the reader, and this is just what in many cases the latter cannot be expected to be possessed of.

It is, therefore, for the benefit of the ordinary reader that the following pages have been written—the ordinary

reader who desires to have some little insight into some of these recently-discovered documents, but who finds, on the one hand, that newspaper articles do not give him enough, while learned journals and books give him too much. It is, however, only right to add that in dealing with a subject of this kind for the benefit of non-experts a writer runs a certain risk; for, in the first place, there are many technicalities which cannot be touched upon since they cannot be understood excepting by those who have some previous knowledge of ancient manuscripts, &c., and yet the importance and significance of such technical points is often very great; thus the writer cannot do full justice to his subject, and his readers miss, perforce, some facts which are important; and, in the second place, it is altogether impossible to avoid touching upon some matters which *are* technical, with the result that some passages in the following pages may appear dull and academical.

Nevertheless, the risk is worth running, because it is most desirable that the thinking laity should have some idea of the importance of these more or less recent discoveries, and that they should realize the fact that every ray of new light shed upon the history of the Bible goes, in essentials, to substantiate the truth, and genuineness, and authority of those Scriptures which the Church has given to the world.

The first of the documents to be considered—a papyrus of the Ten Commandments in Hebrew—directs attention to the text of the Old Testament; the third—a quite newly discovered uncial manuscript of the four Gospels—affords an opportunity of saying something about the

text of the New Testament; in each case it is *Textual* Criticism, *i.e.*, the "Lower Criticism" of the Bible that is dealt with. The second document with which we shall be concerned cannot, perhaps, strictly speaking, be called a Biblical document in the same sense as the other two; and yet it is so closely allied with much that we read in the Gospels, that the term Biblical Document in reference to it may, nevertheless, be justified.

* * *

A Papyrus of the Ten Commandments in Hebrew.

WHAT is a "papyrus?" And what is there especially interesting in the fact that the papyrus to be considered contains the Ten Commandments in Hebrew,—have we not got the Bible in Hebrew, every copy of which encloses within itself the Ten Commandments?

Papyrus was to the ancient Egyptians what vellum was to the monks of the Middle Ages, and what paper is to us; "it is a material resembling paper in general characteristics, but manufactured out of the fibres of the papyrus-plant, which grew plentifully in the waters of the Nile. The fibres of the stalk of this plant were separated, and laid upon one another in two layers, so that the fibres in the upper layer ran horizontally, and those of the lower layer perpendicularly. The two layers were then moistened with Nile water and fastened together by glue and pressure into a single sheet. These sheets were then attached to one another, side by side, so as to form long rolls of papyrus; the surface of the roll was rubbed and polished until it was smooth enough to be written on with ease; and on these rolls the writing was inscribed with reed pens and vegetable ink . . . Brittle as the papyrus becomes with age, the dry climate of Egypt has preserved hundreds and thousands of such manuscripts, the earliest now extant having been written about the year 2500 B.C. These were the books with which the Israelites became

familiar during their residence in Egypt, and it was from these that the form of their books in later times were derived."* It is only within quite recent years that the real search for papyri has taken place; but the labours of those who have been engaged in this have been abundantly rewarded. It is labour of a different kind that has now to be done. "The great published collections of these treasures confront us," says Prof. Deissmann, "like some high mountain that has just been discovered, and from whose summit we shall be able to see farther than ever our ancestors could; but," he adds, "we have not yet climbed one tenth part of the ascent."†

The great majority of papyri are written in Greek, very few have hitherto been discovered containing Hebrew writing;** that fact would of itself show the importance of the papyrus we are about to consider; but it has other claims besides this upon our attention.

No very early Hebrew manuscripts of our Bible have been preserved; the earliest in existence is in the British Museum, and was "probably written about A.D. 820-850;"‡ so that, although the Old Testament was written at least five hundred years before the New Testament, yet the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament are about four hundred years older than the oldest manuscript of the Old Testament. How is this to be explained?

* Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, pp. 19f.

† *The Philology of the Greek Bible*, p. 31. See also, Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, pp. 13-25 (1908.)

** Aramaic papyri have been found in larger numbers.

‡ Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, p. 469.

In this way: the Jewish Biblical manuscripts of the Old Testament were used in the Synagogues, being read during the daily services; they were thus subjected to constant wear and tear; now the Jews, in a true spirit of reverence, considered that everything which was used in the service of God must be of the best, and without blemish; therefore as soon as a synagogue manuscript, or synagogue-roll as it should more correctly be called, showed signs of wear, it was put aside into what was called the "Genizah";* that is to say, a kind of lumber-room which usually adjoined the Synagogue. But further, the Jews had a very great veneration for their copies of the Scriptures, even when they were worn out; and therefore, lest from any cause these used manuscripts should run the risk of desecration, they were, after a short time, either burned, or buried; not infrequently on the death of some celebrated Rabbi copies of these Scriptures would be buried with him. Thus it has come about that no early manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament have been preserved.

Everyone knows that, owing to transcription, the text of a manuscript is subject to variations; and the oftener a manuscript is copied the more liable it is to suffer from the results of such variations. Now the following fact is worth considering,—from the time that the Hebrew Old Testament was completed to the time of the earliest manuscript which we possess of it, is a period of, at the very least, a thousand years;

* Here were also placed heretical Hebrew books, so that it served "the two-fold purpose of preserving good things from harm and bad things from harming," *Jewish Encycl.*, v. 612.

it must undoubtedly be more, but let us take that as a round number; a thousand years,—how often copies must have been made during that time,—what scope there was for variations in the text! If within that period, therefore, any manuscript of any part of the Hebrew Old Testament is discovered one can at once realize how important such a find must be.

That is the case with the small Hebrew papyrus to be considered. Here we have a part—a very tiny part, it is true, but a very important part—of the Hebrew Old Testament which is about six hundred years older than the earliest manuscript of the Old Testament, or any part of it, hitherto known to be in existence. As Prof. Burkitt, one of the greatest palæographists in the country, says: "There is every reason to suppose that the Papyrus is at least five or six hundred years older than any piece of Hebrew writing known to scholars."*

This papyrus is called the Nash papyrus, because it was got from Egypt by Mr. W. L. Nash, the Secretary of the Society of Biblical Archæology; he has since most generously presented it to the Cambridge University Library. It is in "four pieces, the largest of which measures $3\frac{7}{8}$ in. × $1\frac{7}{8}$ in. It is perfect at the head, but mutilated at the foot and at both edges"†; with the other three smaller fragments, it measures altogether 5 in. × $2\frac{7}{8}$ in. It contains twenty-four lines of Hebrew

* *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, xv. p. 392. See also N. Peters, *Die älteste Abschrift der Zehn Gebote* (1905).

† S. A. Cooke, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, xxv. p. 35.

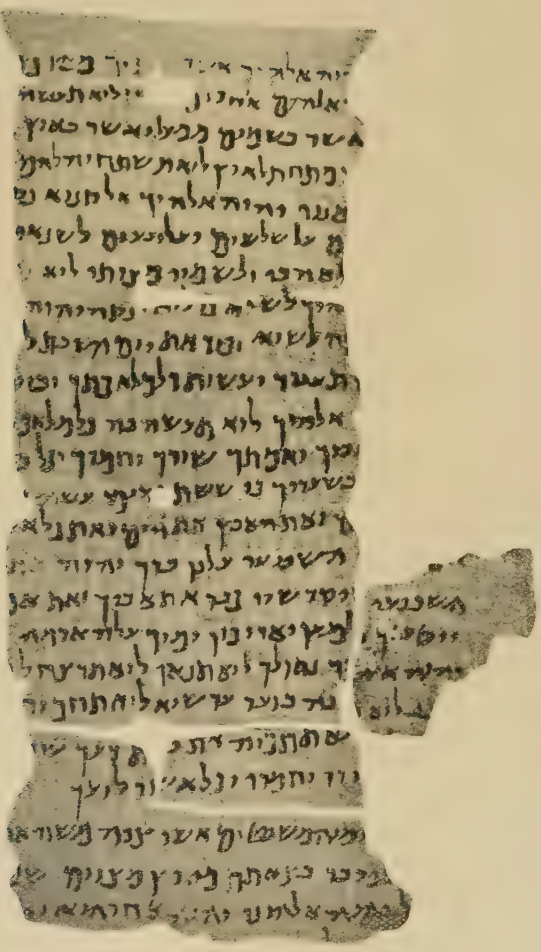

PLATE I.

To face p. 9.]

with probable traces of a twenty-fifth.* Mr. S. A. Cooke, who has made a most minute study of it, says: "The fragment distinguishes itself pre-eminently from all known papyri by reason of its contents. It contains the Decalogue and the *Shema'*, but with remarkable divergences from the Massoretic† text (that is, the *traditional* text as at present contained in our Hebrew Bible); "indeed," he goes on to say, "not only may it be asserted that no one manuscript is known to contain so many variants in so short a space, but the majority of them are absolutely unique."‡

The *Shema'* is a kind of confession of faith which has been constantly repeated by every orthodox Jew since the return from the exile; the word *Shema'* means "Hear," and it is so called from the opening words of the Biblical passage to which this name is given, namely Deut. vi. 4–9, which begins: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is One."

* See Plate I.

† From the Hebrew word *Massora*, "Tradition." The expression "Massoretic" is not, strictly speaking, correct; for the canonical text, though in a fluid state, was in existence long before the time of the "Massoretes." The *Sopherim* ("Scribes") were the guardians of the canonical text, which they copied and revised. The "Massoretes," who belonged to a later time, were, in the words of Dr. Ginsburg, "the authoritative custodians of the traditionally transmitted text . . . their province was to safeguard the text delivered to them by 'building a hedge around it,' to protect it against alterations, or the adoption of any readings which still survived in manuscripts or were exhibited in the ancient versions" (*Op. cit.* p. 421). Concerning the reason on account of which the Massoretic text, in the strict sense, came into being, see Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, pp. 127 f, (1907).

‡ *Op. cit.* p. 36.

Of greater importance, however, is the other part of the contents of the manuscript, namely the Decalogue. Everyone knows that the Ten Commandments exist in two forms in the Old Testament, namely in Exodus xx. 2—17, and Deut. v. 6—21, and these are not identical, they differ in a number of points ; that fact is one of the many indications which suggest that the Pentateuch cannot have all come from the same author.

Does our papyrus follow the *Exodus* or the *Deuteronomy* form of the Ten Commandments ? The interesting fact is that it follows neither the one nor the other, or perhaps we may say it follows both. While, on the whole leaning more to *Exodus* than to *Deuteronomy*, and while presenting a text which contains elements from each, the important point is that the Hebrew text upon which the fragment is based was far from being identical with either that of *Exodus* or *Deuteronomy* which we have in our Hebrew Bibles of to-day.* That is to say that while hitherto we have had three forms of the Ten Commandments (we shall refer to the third presently) we now have four. Which represents the oldest form ? We may take comfort in the fact that in *Exodus* we have, probably, the purest, and therefore the oldest, form. To give the reasons for this supposition would require a very detailed examination of the texts, which is impossible here ; but there are good grounds for believing that the traditional text which we have in *Exodus* represents on the whole a closer approximation to the text which was known, for example, to Ezra than that of the papyrus, though in some points it is quite

* Cf. Burkitt *Op. cit.* xv, p. 399.

likely that the papyrus has preserved the more original form.

So that the first great result of the finding of this papyrus is to uphold, in the main, the correctness and reliability of the present Hebrew text of our Bible. This is not a matter of small moment; for it must be obvious to everybody that such an early witness to the substantial purity of the Hebrew text, especially when such external witness is excessively rare, constitutes a fact of far-reaching importance; and although it deals with only a, comparatively speaking, short passage, the witness is not for that reason to be despised.

But there is another matter regarding this papyrus which is, likewise, of importance. In spite of what was said just now about the purity of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament as we now have it, it must be added that not the *whole* of this is pure; there are many passages which are so corrupt as to be untranslateable; in many cases our English Versions, both Authorized and Revised, give a text which does not correspond to the Hebrew for the simple reason that the Hebrew text, as it stands, does not mean anything at all. In some such cases the Revised Version adds in the margin the words: "The text is probably corrupt" (*e.g.* Am. iv. 3., 2 Sam. xxiii. 8.); but in most cases the corruption of the text is not indicated; and often a paraphrase is given of what the original is *supposed* to represent. In short, there are a large number of passages of which it is very difficult, and often impossible, to make out the sense, because the text has come down to us in a multilated form;— are there any means of correcting the Hebrew

text and of ascertaining what the original form probably was? Yes, there are such means; there exists a translation of the Hebrew text which was made about 150 to 200 years before Christ (quite roughly speaking), and which was made from a Hebrew text differing in many respects from that of our Hebrew Bibles, and which was clearly much older than this; we mean, of course, the Greek Old Testament, known by the name of the *Septuagint*, so-called from an old story, once believed to be true, that seventy-two learned Jews came from Jerusalem to Alexandria to undertake the translation, and that they finished it in seventy-two days.* This Greek Old Testament is a most valuable means of correcting mistakes and rectifying corrupt passages in the Hebrew Bible. Now the reason why we have referred to the *Greek* Old Testament in connection with our Hebrew papyrus is this;—We have seen that the Hebrew text upon which the fragment is based was "far from being identical with the Massoretic text," that is, the *traditional* text of the Hebrew Bible as we now have it. "Even if we refer each phrase to its origin in *Exodus* or *Deuteronomy*, whichever be the most convenient, there still remain several readings which do not agree with the Hebrew Bible (Massoretic text,) and *do agree with the Greek Bible (Septuagint)*. . . . In this Papyrus, therefore, we have a Hebrew document based upon a text which is not the Massoretic text, but has notable points of agreement with that which underlies the *Septuagint*, and it is not a question only of difference

* See, on this subject, Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, pp. 9-20 (1900).

from the Massoretic standard ; mere differences might have arisen through carelessness. The all-important point is the agreement with the Septuagint."* We referred just now to *three* forms of the Decalogue which existed previous to the finding of this papyrus ; two are the *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy* forms ; the third is that of the Hebrew text which underlay the *Greek* Old Testament. It will, therefore, be seen now that since our Hebrew papyrus supports the Greek in a number of instances *against* the (Massoretic) text of our present Hebrew Bibles, we have an *independent* witness of the fact that the Greek text was translated from a Hebrew text differing from that of our Hebrew Bibles to-day. Or to put the matter in another way :—in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy* we have two differing forms of the Ten Commandments ; in the Greek Bible we have the translation of again another differing form ; in the Papyrus we have another differing form. All four, while agreeing in the main, differ, nevertheless, sufficiently to show that at the beginning of the Christian Era there was no *fixed form* of the Ten Commandments. In the main, and this requires emphasis, all these forms agree; substantially, the Ten Commandments as we now know them are the same in form with the Ten Commandments known at the beginning of the Christian Era ; but the differences in the *text* are sufficiently diverse to prove that this was not fixed at the period named. One example of differences in the text is the order of the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments. The order in the Papyrus agrees with that of the New Testament (excepting

* Burkitt, *Op. cit.* p. 399.

St. Matthew xix. 18) as found in St. Mark x. 19, St. Luke xviii. 20, Rom. xiii. 9, and Jas. ii. 11, against the order of the Massoretic text. Three variations in the order of these three commandments are met with in ancient authorities. As Mr. S. A. Cooke truly remarks :— "The scrupulous fidelity in the preservation and correct transmission of the Old Testament dates only from a certain period. It is due to this care that the consonantal text has remained virtually unchanged during the last seventeen hundred years, and that we can trace it back through the oldest manuscripts to the Vulgate, the Targums, the translation of Aquila, and the Mishna. But a critical and unbiassed study of such *earlier and independent* writings as the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the book of Jubilees, etc., forces the conviction that the text has not always been in the fixed state in which it has come down to us, and has led to the commonly-accepted opinion that the 'Massoretic' text is but a stage, and that almost the latest one, in the history of the Old Testament text.*

What we, then, find here regarding this short Biblical passage containing the Decalogue *is true of the Old Testament as a whole;* it offers precisely the same conditions on a small scale which we find on a large scale in the whole Bible; that is to say, while the various authorities agree in the main, there is often wide divergence regarding particular passages. What deductions are to be drawn from this fact? There are two; the first is that, seeing that in the main the various forms of the texts agree, we are abundantly justified

* *Op. cit.* pp. 46 f.

in regarding the text of the Old Testament as, in the main, trustworthy. To many who have always regarded the Bible as something altogether infallible, it may sound almost presumptuous to say that "we are justified in regarding the text of the Old Testament as, in the main, trustworthy!" But let it be remembered that we are living in an age in which we are learning more and more that nothing can be taken for granted; the very fact that, in the past, people have taken the infallibility of the Bible for granted, has been sufficient for a good many other people to repudiate its authority altogether. The scientific spirit of the age—a spirit which is altogether to be welcomed, in spite of its drawbacks—the scientific spirit of the age demands that, as St. Peter said, we must be "ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. iii. 15); and therefore, when on scientific grounds, when after a minute historical and critical examination of the various texts of the Bible, we can boldly face the enemy and say: "We challenge you to dispute our contention that the scientific study of the Bible has resulted in proving the substantial trustworthiness of it,"—when we can confidently confront the enemy in that way, it is an immense gain; for it shows that our position is not an apologetic one, but that we stand on firm ground, even from the purely human point of view, and that, given straightforwardness and fairplay, the contest must sooner or later result in the adversary's confession: "You are right!"

That is the first deduction to be drawn from what has been said; the second is this:—while in the main the

text of the Bible is to be relied upon, in many details, sometimes very important details, our Bible *in its present form* is not to be relied upon. Does this sound like a contradiction of what has just been said? Indeed it is not so in reality. For note, it was not said *the Bible*, but the Bible *in its present form*. The scientific study of the Bible has shown that in the transmission of the text many errors have crept in; is there anything so very terrible about that? Whether there is or not, it is, nevertheless, a fact; and facts are things which must be boldly faced, especially when they are disagreeable. There are mistakes in the text of the Bible; but people must not, for that reason, be afraid, or jump to absurd conclusions when they hear about the "Criticism of the Bible;" the object of the criticism of the Bible by men is to try and rectify the errors that other men have made. And it is just such "finds" as the Papyrus of which we have been speaking which help so immensely towards a sane and really scientific criticism of the text of the Bible.

When one thinks of it, the two deductions which we have just made constitute an analogy—an analogy illustrative of what is called the inspiration of the Bible;—inspiration must always imply a two-fold action,—the inspirer and the inspired; God inspires, man is inspired; but this two-fold action means the action of God and the action of man; yet, while man is a passive object when receiving inspiration, it is very certain that having been inspired, he can no longer remain passive. Apply this to the Bible; God inspired men, and, prompted by that inspiration, men wrote.

God is infallible; but are men? The message was perfect; but were the messengers? If the messengers had been perfect like the message they received, there would be no need of Biblical criticism. Let us be content to take the facts as we find them, and do what we can to make the best of them.

Selected Literature:—

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W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, for such subjects referred to as "Scribes," "Genizah," "Shema'," etc. (1907).

A. Deissmann, *The Philology of the Greek Bible* (1908) and *Licht vom Osten* (an English translation of this great work is published (1908). These two books, and especially the latter, give exhaustive information about the Papyri.

The New Sayings of Jesus.

THE Dispersion of the Jews, which may be dated, in its first beginnings, from the time of the return from the Babylonian Captivity, was one of the most far-reaching factors in the preparation of the world for the founding of Christianity. From almost every point of view the most important centre of the Jewish Dispersion was Alexandria, and Egypt generally. The nucleus for a Jewish population had existed in Egypt for centuries before the Christian Era.

When Christianity was founded there was at first,—at all events in the eyes of the world generally—no essential difference between Jew and Christian; and the Jewish colonies, dotted about all over the civilized world, were the natural centres to which the first Christian missionaries were drawn. That this was so will be obvious to everyone who reads the *Acts of the Apostles*. It does not, therefore, require a great stretch of imagination to believe that in these Jewish centres arose many of the earliest Christian communities; this was the more likely to be the case in that among the Jews of the *Dispersion* the Jewish religion partook of a freer mental atmosphere; the contact with Greek thought which was one of the most important results of the Dispersion, had preserved them from the narrow particularism of Palestinian Judaism. It follows, therefore, that in these centres of the Jewish Dispersion that enlarged and

developed form of Judaism which Christ taught was more likely to be received with favour than in Palestine itself. As Harnack says, in his *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity** (I. p. 50): "It is beyond doubt that within Judaism itself, especially throughout the Diaspora, tendencies were already abroad by which the temple-cultus, and primarily its element of bloody sacrifices, was regarded as unessential and even of doubtful validity . . . ." That attitude of mind among the Jews of the Dispersion was altogether favourable to the acceptation of the new Faith : and, therefore, scholars were entirely justified in the past in expecting that records of early Christianity would be found on the ancient sites of the Jewish Dispersion,—especially in Egypt, because, as already remarked, Egypt was by far the most important centre of the Dispersion. Thus it is more a matter of gratification than of surprise that within the last few years the soil of Egypt has yielded early Christian documents of the highest importance. It was in Egypt that the Papyrus of the Ten Commandments was found, and it was in Egypt that the document we are now about to consider was found. At a place called Oxyrhyncus, about 120 miles south of Cairo, on the edge of the desert, Drs. Grenfell and Hunt discovered in 1897 a manuscript containing eight "Sayings" of Christ ; more recently, in 1903, they discovered another manuscript containing five more of these "Sayings." It is with these more recently discovered ones that we are going to deal now. Both manuscripts belong to the early part of the third century, and are thus about 150

* Second Edition.

years older than the earliest known manuscript of the Gospels. Before coming to our subject proper it will be not inappropriate to quote two passages from our Gospels; the reason for doing so will appear as we proceed. The first is St. Luke i. 1, 2: *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced out all things accurately, from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.* It is as clear as possible from these words that there were a number of Gospel records in existence before St. Luke wrote his account of the Gospel. It is, moreover, to be noted that St. Luke makes no special claim of superior accuracy for what he is about to write; he only insists that he is fitted for his undertaking because he has traced out all things accurately; words which, if they mean anything at all, mean that he utilized earlier material, oral and written. Nor, again, does St. Luke throw the slightest doubt upon the truth or accuracy of the earlier writings to which he refers, seeing that he speaks of the writers of them as "eye-witnesses" and "ministers of the word;" all that he intends is to write another account for the benefit of a certain Theophilus.

The other passage is St. John xxi. 25: *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.*

Here, again, it is obvious that many things were said and done by our Lord which have not been recorded in the Gospels as we now have them.

These two passages, therefore, tell us that, firstly, there were written records in existence over and above those with which we are familiar; and, secondly, that there was abundant *material* from which to compile such records over and above those which are represented in our Gospel compilations.

This truth is illustrated in the New Testament itself; St. Paul tells the elders of the Church of Ephesus, *to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts xx. 35); this saying occurs nowhere in the Gospels as we now have them, yet nobody would doubt St. Paul's testimony, even if the saying were not so absolutely in the spirit of Christ as they actually are. Other sayings of our Lord not recorded in the Gospels are preserved in early Christian writings and in the writings of the Church Fathers; to give but one or two examples:— in the Epistle of Barnabas (vii.) our Lord is quoted in the words: "They who desire to behold me and to take hold of my kingdom must in affliction and in suffering receive me." Again, Origen *(de Orat.* § 2) records this saying: "Jesus said unto his disciples, Ask great things, and small things shall be added unto you; yea, ask heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added unto you." Other sayings, some of which ought perhaps to have been incorporated in our printed Gospels, are preserved in ancient manuscripts; to give but one example: in the great Cambridge manuscript, Codex

Bezae (known by the symbol D), after St. Luke vi. 4 occur these words: "On the same day having seen one working on the Sabbath He said to him, O man, if indeed thou knowest what thou doest, thou art blessed; but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed, and art a transgressor of the law." A very large number of other instances could be given from various sources; they all point to the fact, taught as we have seen, in the Gospels themselves, that much of what our Lord did and spoke has not been recorded in the Gospels as we now have them, nor even in their original forms;—and yet those acts and sayings, many of them at least, were evidently remembered and handed down. But since the early days of Christianity no new ones have come to light until about ten years ago.

It will be of interest to quote, first, the earlier discovered "Sayings" before we come to deal with the more recent ones They are as follows, emended words are placed within square brackets :—

1. ". . . and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." Cf. St. Matthew vii. 5 St. Luke vi. 42; the words of the Saying agree exactly with those of the latter passage.

2. "Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God, and except ye keep the Sabbath, ye shall not see the Father."

3. "Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are

blind in their heart [and see not]." With the first clause cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16, *He was manifested in the flesh.*

4. ". . . poverty. . . ." This is all that it is possible to make out.

5. "[Jesus] saith, [Where] ever there are [two, they are not without] God, and [wherever there is] one alone, [I] say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood, and there am I." For the former half of this Saying, cf. St. Matthew xviii. 20. With regard to the second the two following passages are worth quoting:—Hab. ii. 11, *For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam of the timber shall answer it.* II (IV) Esdras v. 5, *And blood shall drop out of the wood, and the stone shall give his voice; and the people shall be troubled.* This last is from an eschatological section.

6. "Jesus saith, A prophet is not acceptable in his own land, neither doth a healer work cures on them that know him." Cf. St. Matt. xiii. 57, St. Mark vi. 4, St. Luke iv. 24 St. John iv. 44.

7. "Jesus saith, A city built upon the summit of a high mountain, and firmly founded, can neither fall nor be hidden." Cf. St. Matthew v. 14, vii. 24, 25.

8. "[Jesus saith, Thou hearest with one ear, but the other hast thou closed]." This last Saying is probably correct, but the bottom of the papyrus* is so mutilated that it would be precarious to say positively that the above represents a translation of the original. Drs. Grenfell and Hunt conclude their *brochure* on these

* Excellent plates of the papyrus are given in Grenfell and Hunt *Sayings of our Lord*.

Sayings thus:—"The genuine ring of what is new in this fragment, and the primitive cast of the whole, are all in favour of its independence of our Gospels in their present shape."

The *New* Sayings, like the earlier ones, are written on papyrus, and in Greek; but unlike the earlier ones, they have come down to us in a very damaged condition. In spite of this, however, their meaning is in almost every case clear; the actual wording may not be correct in every detail, but one may assert that substantially the following translations are reliable, for I am almost guided wholly in this by Dr. Swete, who has amended the mutilated portions with rare acumen, such as only a scholar of great experience and profound learning could undertake with success.

The "Sayings" are prefaced by a prologue, which runs: "And the Lord said to him, Whosoever shall hearken to these sayings, he shall in nowise taste of death;" but above these words is a note, which the compiler of the Sayings must have written, to the effect that: "These are the true sayings which Jesus who liveth, and was dead, spake to Judas Thomas." In St. John xiv. 22 we read: *Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord . . .;* in the Old Syriac Version the reading here is: "Judas Thomas saith unto him . . ."; there is, therefore, good authority for the name 'Judas Thomas.'

The first of the actual Sayings is as follows: "Jesus saith, Let not him who seeks the Father cease until he find Him; and when he finds Him he shall be amazed; amazed he shall reach the Kingdom; and having reached

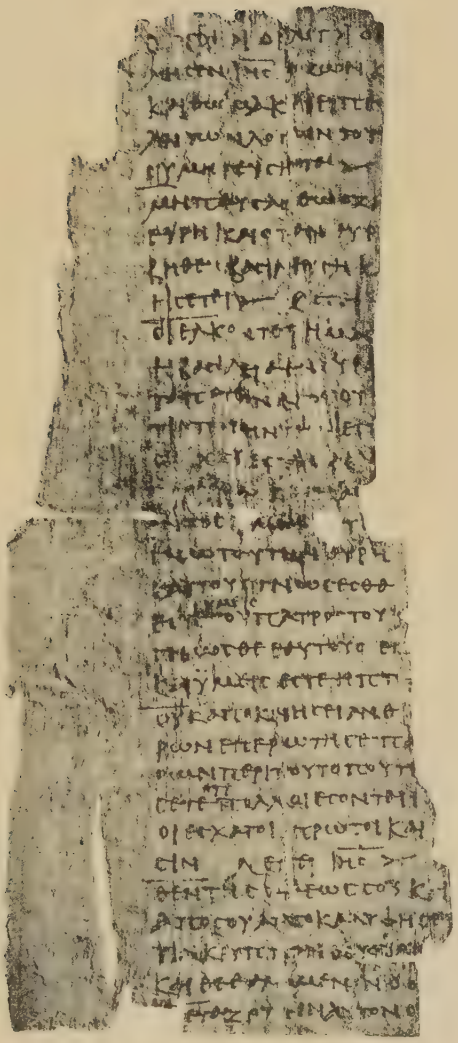

PLATE II.

To face p. 24.]

the Kingdom, he shall rest." This Saying has long been known, from the writings of Clement of Alexandria, who has preserved a very similar, though not absolutely identical, form of it; but this fact goes to substantiate the genuineness of the recently-discovered Saying, which is, however, certified on other grounds as well. There is no ambiguity about the meaning of this Saying; but there is one expression, namely that which contains the central thought, which demands a further word. The Greek for the word translated "amazed" is very pregnant according to New Testament usage (see St. Mark x. 24., xiv. 33, Acts iii. 10); it means "the sudden sensation akin on the one hand to fear, and on the other, to ecstasy which attends the unexpected, especially when it belongs to the region of the supernatural or divine. Thus in the present Saying the word indicates with precision the rush of mingled fear and joy which ought to follow the great εὕρηκα of life, the discovery of God."*

The second Saying is very difficult, I give it in the words of Dr. Swete: "Jesus saith, Who are they that draw you to the Kingdom? The Kingdom is in heaven; but they that are on earth, and the birds of the heaven, and every creature that is under the earth and in Hades, and the fishes of the sea,—these are they that draw you to it. And the Kingdom of heaven is within you, and whosoever shall know himself shall find it; for if ye shall truly know yourselves, ye are the sons and daughters of the Father Almighty, and ye shall know yourselves to be in the city of God,—and ye are

* Swete in *Expos. Times*, xv. p. 491.

the city." This long Saying, so full of suggestive matter, would require a paper for itself if it were to be adequately dealt with ; here we must content ourselves with a brief reference to the word which gives the key-note to the whole Saying. This word is, "to draw,"—"Who are they that *draw* you to the kingdom"—. This word describes "the attractive or magnetic power which draws the soul towards a person or a goal." Bearing this in mind the Saying may be paraphrased in this way (the words are those of Dr. Swete): "The kingdom is in heaven; it is spiritual and invisible, and belongs to another order; yet the visible creation, the common objects of outward life, rightly used and understood, have the power of directing you to God and things above ; or, as St. Paul expresses the same truth: *The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and dignity.* The physical creation ought to be an ally and not an adversary to the soul that strives to attain the kingdom of God . . . Furthermore, the Speaker continues, the kingdom of God is not only in heaven. It is within men, and all that tends to self-knowledge attracts them to it. 'Know yourselves aright, and you are the children of God; you belong to the City of God, nay, you yourselves constitute that City.' The study of Nature, the study of Man, are forces which in loyal disciples make for righteousness, *drawing* them to the highest and best things, and not, as in others, distracting attention from them."

When one remembers how constantly our Lord bases His teaching on what men saw around them in Nature

this explanation of the Saying must strike one as very apt and appropriate; the visible world of Nature *is* a divine revelation.

The third Saying is very difficult to reconstruct, at all events the first half of it, so that we cannot lay much stress on it; it runs: "Jesus saith, A man will not hesitate to inquire boldly about the seasons, prating of the place of glory. But ye shall hold your peace; for many that are first shall be last, and the last first, and few shall find it." The latter half of this Saying occurs word for word (according to the best reading) in St. Mark x. 31; the meaning of the whole Saying is determined by these words. "Prating about the place of glory" evidently refers to the boasting of some who conceived that they were entitled to a place of special honour in the Kingdom. One is irresistibly reminded of St. Matth. xx. 20ff., where we are told of how the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to our Lord, and said: *Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left, in thy Kingdom;* Christ's rebuke in reply to such an unwarranted pretension contains these words: *Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant.* That seems, at any rate, to express the thought of this third Saying.

The fourth Saying is quite easy, being almost identical with some words in our written Gospels, though a sentence is added in the Saying which is of extreme interest; it runs: "Jesus saith, Everything that is not before thy face, and that which is hidden from thee, shall be revealed; for there is nothing hidden which shall not

be made manifest, or buried which shall not be raised." The former part of this Saying is contained, in substance, in St. Matth. x. 26., St. Luke viii. 17; but the last words, "(there is nothing) buried which shall not be raised" are quite new. Do they refer to the resurrection of the body? This is possible, but not certain; Dr. Swete thinks that "the Resurrection may be in the background of the words; but," he says, "if they were spoken during the Ministry, I incline to the belief that they refer, as the Synoptic sayings usually do, to one of the incidents of Galilæan life"; and he mentions the not uncommon occurrence in Palestine of hiding treasure in the ground for the sake of security, cf. St. Matth. xiii. 14, *The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field* . . . At the same time it is worth pointing out that the word here (κρύπτω) is the ordinary one for "to hide," whereas the word used in the Saying (θάπτω) is always used specifically of the burial of the dead; it occurs eleven times in the New Testament, and refers in each case to the burial of the dead; in 1 Cor. xv. 4 we have, in reference to Christ, the words: . . . *and that he was buried, and rose again according to the Scriptures;* the word for "buried" is the same as that used in our Saying. So that the possibility that in this Saying the resurrection of the dead is referred to is not excluded.

The fifth and last of these Sayings is, with the exception of the second, the most important; it is, alas, more mutilated than any of the others, but enough remains to show us quite clearly what its general meaning is. With the emendations it is as follows: "His disciples enquire of Him, and say, How are we to fast?

and how are we to pray? and how are we to give alms? and of such duties what are we to observe? Jesus saith, See that ye lose not your reward. Do nothing save the things that belong to the truth; for if ye do these, ye shall know a hidden mystery. I say unto you, Blessed is the man who . . ," here it breaks off. The disciples are here asking our Lord for guidance regarding almsgiving, prayer, and fasting; one should read the Sermon on the Mount in connection with this Saying. The Pharisaic scribes had laid down definite rules for the observance of these three most important duties for the devout Jew, and it was the most natural thing in the world that the followers of Christ should require guidance from Him in this matter. "The Twelve were still under the influence of the Pharisaism which had been the religious teacher of their youth, and they not unnaturally sought to foist the spirit of legalism into the new teaching." Christ's answer is intensely characteristic of all His teaching :— first He says : " See that ye lose not your reward " ; one is at once reminded of the words of Christ in St. Matth. vi. 1, 2, 5, 16, where just these three things, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, are dealt with ;—Christ says first of all, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them ; else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven ;* then, in speaking of almsgiving, He bids men not to be as the hypocrites who take care to let all the world know what they are giving, and He adds, *Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward ;* in speaking of prayer, He again urges His followers not to be as the hypocrites, who want

the world to think them so good, and therefore stand praying where all men can see them; and again He says, *Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward.* Once again, in speaking of fasting, He warns His followers against the hypocrites who pull a long face and give the impression of being half-starved in order to draw upon themselves the admiration due for their piety; and He says once more: *Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward.* Bearing this in mind is there not great significance in our Saying in the words: "See that ye lose not your *reward*"?*— And the Saying continues: "Do nothing save the things that belong to the truth"; truth which is the very antithesis of hypocrisy. "If ye do these things, ye shall know a hidden mystery"; what mystery is that? "To do the Truth, to grasp and live the great principles of the Gospel, is to win an entrance into that which is yet secret but will presently be revealed,—the higher life behind the veil of sense."†

SELECTED LITERATURE:—

B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, *Sayings of our Lord*‡ (1897), and *New Sayings of Jesus and Fragment of a Lost Gospel* (1904).

W. Lock and W. Sanday, *Two Lectures on the Sayings of Jesus*‡ (1897).

* It is realized that these words are conjectural, but see Swete *Op. Cit.* p. 494.

† Swete, *Ibid*, p. 474.

‡ Refers only to the earlier discovered set of *Sayings*.

H. B. Swete, "The New Oxyrhyncus Sayings," in *The Expository Times* (Aug., 1904).

C. Taylor, *The Oxyrhyncus Logia and the Apocryphal Gospels** (1899).

B. F. Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, pp. 457-465.† (1881).

A. Resch, *Agrapha.* This contains by far the largest collection, hitherto published, of Sayings attributed to our Lord, which are not found in the canonical Gospels. The new edition of this work is dated 1906; there is no English translation.

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* Refers only to the earlier discovered set of *Sayings*.

† This work was published before the discovery of the Oxyrhyncus Sayings.

The New Uncial Manuscript of the Gospels.

IT IS rarely that the world of learning is startled with the announcement that a very ancient uncial manuscript (*i.e.* a manuscript written in capital letters) of the four Gospels complete has been discovered. It is claimed for this new manuscript (which is one of four which came to light simultaneously) that it belongs to the fifth century, possibly to the fourth, but certainly not later than to the sixth century. Of the great uncial Greek manuscripts of the first five centuries there are only two others which contain the Gospels complete—namely *Codex Sinaiticus* (known by the symbol ℵ), in the St. Petersburg library, and *Codex Vaticanus* (known by the symbol B), in the Vatican library at Rome. This fact is of itself sufficient to place the newly-discovered manuscript in the front rank of ancient witnesses to the text of the Gospels. But there are some elements in the text of this new manuscript which to the textual critic are of profound significance and importance; a few examples of these will be given presently. It will be remembered that the Papyrus of the Ten Commandments in Hebrew, as well as both sets of the "Sayings" of Jesus came from the soil of Egypt. We have already seen why Egypt might naturally be expected to furnish us with many records of the early centuries of Christianity (see pp. 18. 19.). The manuscript now to be considered was also found in Egypt. It is asserted that it came

from Akhmim, a place far down in the south of Egypt, almost due north of Abydos, but on the other side of the Nile, *i.e.* on the right bank. Akhmim is the Panopolis of classical antiquity ; Chemmis, according to the ancient Egyptian designation. Other important "finds" have been made at Akhmim in the past. The apocryphal books—or, rather, fragments of them—called the *Gospel of Peter*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*,* were discovered there. Akhmim is therefore marked as a favourable spot. It is, however, possibly for this very reason that we must regard with suspicion the statement that the manuscripts in question were found here ; for the finders of such-like treasures not unnaturally prefer to keep secret the *real* site on which these were discovered, lest other seekers should come and poach on what they consider their preserves ; for, as they argue, the existence of one treasure suggests the likelihood of others in the same neighbourhood. Indeed, it has been practically proved that this manuscript, together with the three others which all appeared together, did *not* come from Akhmim ; for the German scholar Carl Schmidt, a noted palæographist, has recognized all four manuscripts as having formerly belonged to the library of the Shenute-monastery of Atripe, in the neighbourhood of Sohag, opposite Akhmim. This monastery underwent repairs some time ago, when its ancient library was laid bare, though its existence had of course been known to the monks all along ; they have apparently been in the habit

* The *Gospel according to Peter* is referred to by Origen, *Comm. in Matth.* x. 17 ; see J. Armitage Robinson and M. R. James, *The Gospel according to Peter* and *The Revelation of Peter* (1892).

of extracting from it many other manuscripts and of selling them in the past; Carl Schmidt had himself acquired two; one for the Royal Library, the other for the Egyptian Museum, in Berlin.* It is known that in certain cases the Coptic monks are prepared to exchange some of the ancient manuscripts belonging to their libraries for hard cash.†

One of the four manuscripts with which we are concerned shows signs of having quite recently been tampered with, for a number of sheets (it is of course impossible to say how many) have been torn away; the binding shows this. The object for which this has been done is obvious; interest having been aroused by the portion which has been sold, and the importance of this having been recognized, the remaining portion will of course go up in value; so that when—as will presumably be the case—when in the near future this missing portion suddenly appears, the vendor will feel himself justified in asking a big price. A rather interesting little point is this; the portion which has been detached does not belong to the manuscript of the Gospels, which is complete, but to one of the others; now if the rogue or rogues who have cut off part of one of these manuscripts, had known their business better, they would have detached part of that manuscript which contains the four Gospels; because, since far more value is attached by scholars to early copies of the Gospels than to those of any other part of the Bible, the missing portion would have fetched a higher price than it will do now, when it appears. The

* *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, May 3rd, 1908.

† C. R. Gregory, *Das Freer-Logion*, p. 2.

point is not altogether unimportant, for it suggests the *bona fides* of the original owners, as far as the *genuineness* of the manuscript is concerned.

As already remarked, there are four manuscripts which constitute this latest "find"; they were bought in 1907 by Mr. Charles L. Freer, an American. The contents of these, in their present form, are as follows:—the first contains the books of *Deuteronomy* and *Joshua*; the second contains the *Psalms*; the third, the Gospels; and the fourth, fragments of St. Paul's Epistles;—they are all in Greek; and judging from the four or five sheets that have been published, are all quite easy to read, excepting where they are mutilated.

It is with the third of these alone that we are now concerned. The following is a brief account of its outward form:—it is written on parchment, consists of 184 sheets containing thirty lines each having, on the average, thirty letters each (that is, judging from the copy of the only page that has so far been made public)*; each page is approximately twenty-one centimetres by fourteen; there is only one column to the page; it is bound in wooden covers with pictures of the four Evangelists painted on them; this cover belongs perhaps to the seventh century, but the manuscript itself is of the fifth or sixth; Dr. Grenfell would assign it to the fourth, probably; judging from the slanting form of the letters, I am inclined to think that the later date will turn out to be the more likely, though it must be added that the fine character of the parchment and its thinness point to an early century. It contains the four Gospels in the

* Gregory, *Op. cit.*, p. 13; and see Plate III.

order, St. Matthew, St. John, St. Luke, St. Mark. The text from which the manuscript was copied is a thoroughly good one, but the copyist has done his work very carelessly ; we are told that in the first two chapters of St. Matthew there are thirty-six mistakes due to negligence. Some idea of the interest and importance of this manuscript will be seen from the fact that these two chapters alone contain thirty disputed readings.*

Before giving a few instances of the textual character of this manuscript, it will not be out of place to give a very brief outline of the broad divisions, or families, into which scholars have assigned the great mass of the various manuscripts of the Gospels that have come down to us; this will enable the reader to form an intelligent estimate of the interest of the newly-found manuscript, besides giving him a slight insight into the present position of affairs in the domain of New Testament Textual Criticism. The whole object, it need hardly be said, of the enormous amount of labour that has been and is being expended on this matter is to try and get as near as possible to the original form of our Lord's words and of the account of His ministry. What is known as the "Received Text" *(Textus Receptus)* which has been handed down through the Middle Ages, which was accepted by Erasmus, and which has been the officially received text of Western Europe since the Reformation —this text is acknowledged on all hands to be of comparatively late date and as showing many signs of corruption. In the light of the immense mass of biblical documents that have been scientifically dealt

* *Ibid*, p. 16.

with in the last two or three generations, and owing also to the intelligent use of biblical citations in the writings of the earliest Church Fathers, it is now universally acknowledged by those who are conversant with the subject, that this *Textus Receptus* must be greatly amended if we are to have a text more in accordance with the primitive form of the Gospel narrative (this applies, of course, to the whole New Testament, but we are directing our attention here specially to the Gospels). The great question naturally arises, what is to be put in its place? The final form of what that text will be is a matter for future generations to decide; the present duty of scholars is to sift the evidence and classify the material; and this is what they are doing. It may be of interest to indicate the manuscript material *alone* of the New Testament which either has already been, or will in the future have to be, taken into consideration in the effort to give to the world a text which is as nearly as possible primitive. "Of the New Testament," says Nestle, "3829 manuscripts have been catalogued up till the present. A systematic search in the libraries of Europe might add still more to the list; a search in those of Asia and Egypt would certainly do so. Gregory believes that there are probably some two or three thousand manuscripts which have not yet been collated, and every year additional manuscripts are brought to light. . . . The great majority of New Testament manuscripts belong to this later date, [*i.e.*, ninth century], when cursive took the place of uncial handwriting, seeing that out of the 3829 manuscripts there are only 127 Uncials to 3702 Minuscules [*i.e.*, Cursives]. Greek copyists not being

accustomed to date their manuscripts exactly, it becomes the task of palæography to settle the criteria by which the date and place of a manuscript's origin may be determined. These are the style of writing—whether angular or round, upright or sloping; the punctuation—whether simple or elaborate; and the different material and form of the book."* This refers to Greek manuscripts alone; besides these there are Syriac, Latin, Egyptian, Gothic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, and Arabic manuscripts. As to the value of these, we may be permitted to quote Nestle again in the following very interesting passage; speaking of the Versions, *i.e.*, the translations made from the original language of the New Testaments, he says: "The value of their testimony depends on their age and fidelity. When did the first versions originate? This question reminds us of the Inscription on the Cross, a portion of which is still exhibited in Rome. It was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. But we may get further back still. Palestine, at the time of Christ, was a country where the most diverse languages and dialects came into contact with each other. In the last century B.C. a transformation had occurred, which might be regarded as a counterpart to the supplanting of Norman-French by English, or of Low by High German. Aramaic had already taken the place of the old Hebrew, and after the time of Alexander came the intrusion of Greek, and later still of Latin. Some of the disciples of Jesus bore old Hebrew names, like James and John: others had names wholly or partially Aramaic, as Cephas (=Peter),

* *Textual Criticism of the Greek Testament*, pp. 34 f.

the cognomen of Simon, and Bartholomew; while others, again, had Greek names, as Philip and Andrew. To the question what language Jesus Himself spoke, the most probable answer is that it was Aramaic with a Galilæan colouring. 'Though art a Galilæan, thy speech bewrayeth thee,' said the Jerusalem girl to Peter. The Galilæans, like the Babylonians and Samaritans, were recognizable by their not distinguishing the gutturals so sharply as the pure Jews did. At the same time Jesus certainly understood the Hebrew of the Old Testament. . . ."* Clearly, therefore, the first versions must have originated at a very early date. But even the study of manuscripts and versions does not exhaust the labours which have to be undertaken in seeking to get back to the primitive text, as far as this is possible. Another department of immense range is that of biblical quotations in early writings, and in the writings of Church Fathers. Once more let us quote from Nestle's invaluable book: "Our third source of material for the restoration of the text of the New Testament is *quotations* found in other books. These are of great value, because they represent, for the most part, definite manuscripts existing in certain places at the time of the writer quoting them, and also because a large number of them belong to a time from which no codices [manuscripts] have come down to us."†

Now, roughly speaking, this enormous mass of material is divided into three great families, or groups, which represent certain types of text:—

* *Ibid*, pp. 93-94.

† *Ibid*, p. 144.

The first is called the *Syrian Text*, because it originated in Syria about 300 A.D.; it is represented by the great majority of uncial and cursive manuscripts; the more or less discredited "Textus Receptus" is the direct offspring of this type.

The second is called the *Alexandrian Text*, because its origin is associated with the city of Alexandria; its chief representatives are Cod. Vaticanus (B) and Cod. Sinaiticus (ℵ), followed by a group of six other uncials, and several cursives.

The third is called the *Western Text*, because the text represented was found first in Latin manuscripts of the West †; the Cambridge manuscript, Cod. Bezae (D), is one of its most prominent representatives.

The first of these three is of least importance; the great problem which confronts scholars is to fix the relative value of the two latter. In the past the Alexandrian Text has been regarded as by far the more important; but in more recent times, owing to the discovery of some very ancient Latin and Syriac manuscripts, it is coming to be seen that the importance of the "Western" Text has been under-rated, and that many of the specifically "Western" readings are more strongly attested than was supposed.

Now the newly discovered manuscript of the Gospels, as far as one can judge from what has so far been made public, seems, in the first place, to contain both Alexandrian and "Western" elements; so that it is

† The term "Western," although currently adopted, is rather misleading, as in its origin this type of text is at least as much Eastern as Western.

clearly a manuscript of great interest. The few following examples will illustrate this :—

The order of the Gospels is "Western," viz., St. Matthew, St. John, St. Luke, St. Mark.

In St. Luke vi. 5, the words *And He said unto them, The Son of Mary is Lord of the Sabbath,* are omitted, and in place of them we have : *On the same day, seeing one at work on the Sabbath, He said unto him, Man, if thou knowest what thou doest, blessed art thou ; but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed, and a transgressor of the law.* This is the reading of the specifically "Western" manuscript, Cod. Bezae (D).

In St. Luke xxii. 43, 44, the words : *And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him,* which are followed by the account of the agony and the bloody sweat,—all this is omitted, but they occur in D and other "Western" authorities. The long passage St. John vii. 53—viii. 11 which contains the account of the woman taken in adultery, is omitted, though it is found in the Cambridge manuscript ; and the same applies to the passage about the angel troubling the water of the pool of Bethesda. These are only a very few instances showing that our manuscript contains elements proper to the two great families of manuscripts, Alexandrian and "Western," respectively ; and it will be seen from what has been said that this is a highly interesting fact, especially on account of this manuscript being so old, and on account of its coming from Egypt.

But one further example, and it is of greater importance than those already referred to, will illustrate a new element in our manuscript, namely its *independence.*

One of the great problems in the textual criticism of the Gospels is concerned with the end of St. Mark's Gospel. According to the Alexandrian type of text the Gospel ends with xvi. 8: *And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishmeut had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid.* It seems very clear that that is an abrupt and unsatisfactory ending to the Gospel. A very large number of manuscripts, among which are included representatives of all the three families mentioned above, have after verse eight what is called the "Longer Conclusion," *i.e.* verses 9—20 as found in our Bibles; a few other authorities have what is called the "Shorter Conclusion"; that is, they leave out verses 9—20, and, instead, have a short passage saying that Christ sent out through His disciples from east to west "the holy and incorruptible preaching of eternal salvation." Now in the new manuscript not only is the whole of the "Longer Conclusion" found, but after verse 14 some further words are inserted; verse 14 runs thus: *And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen*; here follows now in the newly discovered manuscript this passage, in which the disciples seek to excuse themselves for their unbelief: *And they excused themselves, saying, This world of iniquity and of unbelief is under Satan, who by reason of unclean spirits suffereth not men to comprehend the true power of God. Therefore reveal thy righteousness now. They said these things to Christ. And Christ answered*

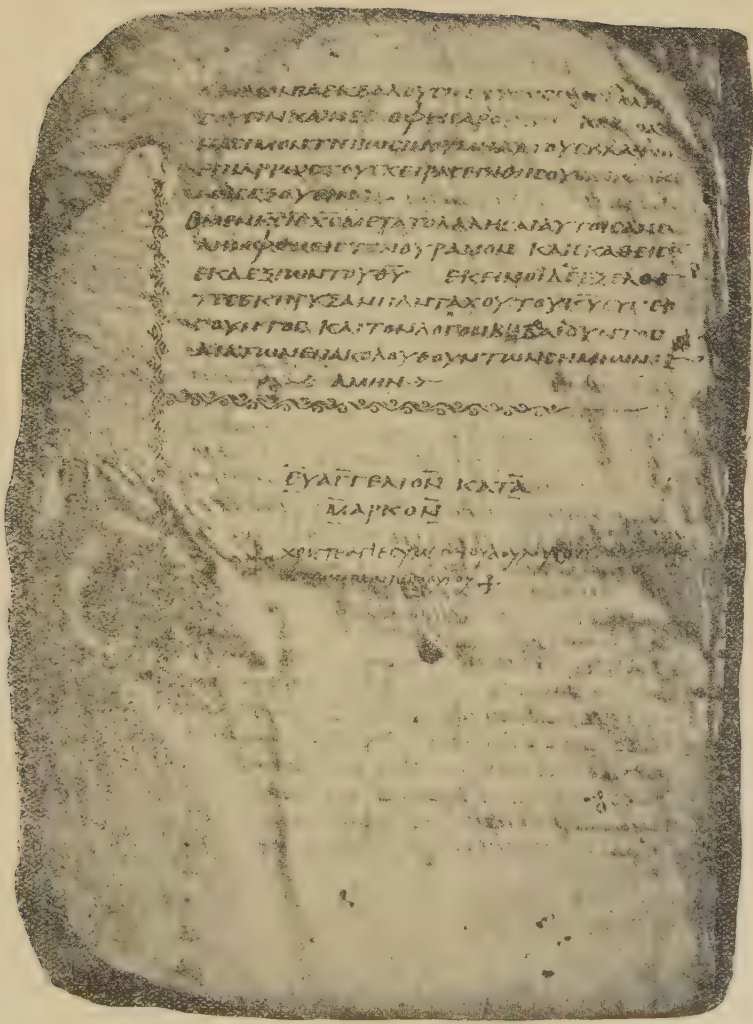

Plate III.

To face p. 42.]

them: The term of years of the power of Satan is fulfilled, but other dangers are nigh; and for the sake of them that sinned was I delivered up unto death that they might return unto the truth and might sin no more; that they might inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness which is in heaven. Then it goes on to verse 15 as found in our Bibles. The particular point of interest about this passage, apart from the actual words and thoughts which it contains, is that no other known manuscript has it; but, on the other hand, St. Jerome knew of it, or at all events some form of it, for it is quoted by him in his treatise against the Pelagians; and he tells us that he had found them not only in Greek manuscripts, but also in those of the Old Latin Version. Furthermore, as Dr. Swete points out, "the longer conclusion was apparently regarded as a genuine part of St. Mark's Gospel already in the time of Irenaeus, so that a lengthy addition to the text such as this is can scarcely have been made *after* the second century."* That takes us back to a very early date, very much earlier than any existing Greek manuscript. And, as Dr. Swete further remarks, it appears to be probable, that almost from the very commencement there existed two recensions of the Conclusion (to St. Mark's Gospel), of which one contained the passage (just quoted), and the other did not contain it, and that for some reason the recension which did not include our passage became preferred generally. But in any case, the new paragraph can scarcely have been a mere gloss. The text in which it appears shows no signs of corruption, the whole runs

* Zwei neue Evangelienfragmente pp. 9, 10.

quite smoothly; the words, "And they excused themselves" come quite naturally after verse 14, where our Lord rebukes their unbelief; and the words of verse 15 follow in a quite natural manner after the new passage. So that there is some justification for believing that this new passage which has come to light, even if not wholly original, is at the least based on some actual words of the Apostles and of Our Lord.

Few as these examples are, they will have been sufficient to give some insight into the interest and importance of the newly-discovered manuscript from which they are taken.

SELECTED LITERATURE:—

H. A. Sanders, in the *Biblical World* Chicago) for Feb. 1908, and E. J. Goodspeed, in the same magazine for March, 1908, have written articles on the manuscript; but the only publication giving detailed information, which has so far appeared, is C. R. Gregory's *Das Freer-Logion;* the first twenty-four pages of this book are devoted to an account of the four manuscripts, one of which (the third) contains the Gospels. The book can be obtained from Williams & Norgate, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

H. B. Swete, *Zwei neue Evangelienfragmente* (1908).

E. Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* (1091); this work cannot be too highly recommended.

L. Pullan, *New Testament Criticism during the past Century* (1908).

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE MESSIANIC IDEA: A study in Comparative Religion. (Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1, Amen Corner, E.C. 3s. 6d., net.)

"It is stimulating, earnest, frank, and full of interesting information."—*Athenæum.*

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